

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FISH AND GAME COMMISSION
STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR REGULATORY ACTION
(Pre-Adoption Statement of Reasons)

Amend Section 27.80
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Re: Ocean Salmon Sport Fishing

- I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: January 6, 2003
- II. Date of Pre-adoption Statement of Reasons: March 17, 2003
- III. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings:
 - (a) Notice Hearing: Date: February 7, 2003
Location: Sacramento, CA
 - (b) Adoption Hearing: Date: April 4, 2003
Location: Visalia, CA
- IV. Description of Modification of Originally Proposed Language of Initial Statement of Reasons:

At the time of drafting the Initial Statement of Reasons, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) had not yet initiated its annual ocean salmon regulatory process. Therefore, only a general description of the possible management options that might be utilized by the PFMC were included (i.e., size limits, bag limits, area quotas, gear restrictions, and season limitations).

During March 10-14, 2003, the PFMC met and proposed three recreational ocean salmon regulatory options for public review. The text of these regulations will be published as Preseason Report II by the PFMC. Under all three options, the season length south of Point Arena is the same as current regulations and the season length is extended 12 days between Horse Mountain and Point Arena by opening all of July.

Other possible changes to current regulations are as follows:

Option 1

Seasons: *North of Horse Mountain and Humboldt Bay (Klamath Management Zone)* - The season length increases 26 days, by opening all of July combined with a 2-day delay in the May opening and a 1-day earlier closure in September. Limit: There is a no weekly catch limit for the entire season.

Option 2

Seasons: *North of Horse Mountain and Humboldt Bay (Klamath Management Zone)* - The season length increases 16 days, with a 19-day increase in July combined with a 2-day delay in the May opening and a 1-day earlier closure in September. Limit: There is a no weekly catch limit for the entire season.

Option 3

Seasons: *North of Horse Mountain and Humboldt Bay (Klamath Management Zone)* - The season length increases 6 days, with an 9 day increase in July combined with a 2-day delay in the May opening and a 1 day earlier closure in September. Limit: There is no change in the existing 6 fish in 7 days limit.

V. Reasons for Modification of Originally Proposed Language of Initial Statement of Reasons:

As noted above, the regulation options presented in this statement were developed by the PPMC during the week of March 10-14, 2003.

General Stock Status Information. Fishing opportunities north of Point Arena will be increased due to high ocean abundances of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho, an endangered species, and Klamath River fall chinook. All Options are expected to meet the PPMC's Klamath River fall chinook management objectives of at least 35,000 adults returning to spawn in natural areas. All Options are expected to meet the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) jeopardy standard established for threatened California coastal chinook: an age-four ocean harvest rate no greater than 16 percent on Klamath River fall chinook.

Fishing opportunities south of Point Arena are similar to 2002 due to high Sacramento River fall chinook ocean abundance predicted for 2003. All Options are expected to meet the PPMC's Sacramento River fall chinook management goal of 122,000 to 180,000 natural and hatchery adult spawners. All Options also satisfy the NMFS 2002 Biological Opinion for endangered Sacramento River winter chinook and threatened Central Valley spring chinook requiring that the duration and timing of 2003 commercial and recreational fisheries south of Point Arena not change substantially relative to the 2000 and 2001 seasons.

Stock abundance predictions for 2003 are provided in the PPMC Preseason Report I.

Option 1

This option provides an increase in fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery, primarily during July. The area between Horse Mountain and Point Arena has more fishing days compared to current regulations by opening all of July. The KMZ weekly catch limit is eliminated in this option. These changes are due to high ocean abundances of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho, an endangered species, and Klamath River fall chinook.

Option 2

This option provides a moderate increase in fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery. The area between Horse Mountain and Point Arena has more fishing days compared to current regulations by opening all of July. The KMZ weekly catch limit is eliminated in this option. These changes are due to high ocean abundances of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho, an endangered species, and Klamath River fall chinook.

Option 3

This option provides a slight increase in fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery. The area between Horse Mountain and Point Arena has more fishing days compared to current regulations by opening all of July. These changes are due to high ocean abundances of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho, an endangered species, and Klamath River fall chinook.

VI. Summary of Primary Considerations Raised in Opposition and in Support:

No comments have been received in opposition to or in support of the proposed action.

Updated Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

Annually, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) develops ocean salmon fishing regulations that must meet specific allocation and spawning escapement goals for the stocks managed under the Salmon Fishery Management Plan.

The Initial Statement of Reasons reflected the range of possible management measures that will be considered for 2003. At the PFMC's March 10-14, 2003 meeting, three options were developed that will consider specific changes from current regulations. The following changes are due to high ocean abundance forecasts of Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN) coho, an endangered species, and Klamath River fall chinook.

Under all three options, the season length south of Point Arena is the same as current regulations, and the season length is extended 12 days between Horse Mountain and Point Arena by opening all of July.

The options are as follows:

Option 1

This option provides an increase of 26 fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery compared to current regulations. There is a no weekly catch limit in KMZ for the entire season.

Option 2

This option provides an increase of 16 fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery compared to current regulations. There is a no weekly catch limit in KMZ for the entire season.

Option 3

This option provides an increase of 6 fishing days in the Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) sport fishery compared to current regulations.

The final regulation recommendations will be made by the PFMC on April 11, 2003. Upon approval of the PFMC's management recommendations by the Secretary of Commerce, the State must move in a timely manner to conform its ocean sport fishing regulations for salmon in State waters (0 to 3 miles offshore) to those agreed upon by the PFMC. The federal regulations are expected to be implemented effective May 1, 2003.